



Business Strategy 2012/13 to 2014/15

Children, Education & Families Directorate

Introduction

1. As outlined in the Business Strategy agreed for 2011/12 to 2014/15 the context for Children's Services has changed significantly in the last two years and will continue to change over the period leading up to 2015/16. In the last year there have been significant changes affecting all aspects of our work. The **Council's Business Strategy** and our **Business Strategy** were devised to support us in proactively meeting the challenges in the last year and enabling us to react swiftly to unexpected changes affecting our work in the years to come.
2. In order to deliver required savings the Business Strategy was designed to fundamentally rethink how we could meet our statutory responsibilities and duties in a different way. In the first year of our Business Strategy significant aspects of service and structure have been redesigned. We have been shaping our services and structure in a more co/ordinated way, based on research of what interventions work and how the most cost effective use of resources can be made. Our aim has been to deliver services that are more efficient **and** effective. We have been implementing change that aims to:
 - Deliver good outcomes for all children and young people;
 - Secure for the poorest and most vulnerable in society, the ability to improve their outcomes by effectively targeting resources to those most in need;
 - Engage non state providers, communities or partnerships in delivering those outcomes locally;
 - Continually strives to improve the economic efficiency and effectiveness of our activities.
3. Over the last twelve months the Directorate has:
 - kept a sustained focus on delivering savings and improving performance;
 - designed, consulted on and implemented service and structural changes which have delivered the savings within the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2011/12 and made significant progress on the delivery of savings for 2012/13 onwards;
 - kept focus on improving outcomes for children, young people and their families ensuring delivery of improved service performance for 2011/12 to date in the face of considerable and sustained demand, particularly in children's social care;
 - supported schools, academies and colleges through a period of financial change and increased our ability to offer services to them that historically we had neither costed, charged for or traded.

4. As experienced by most Directorates within the Council there has been a significant number of Government commissioned reviews, consultations, and policy changes in the last year. These will inevitably require changes to the ways in which we work and these are taken into account in setting the priorities for the services in the coming months and years.

Priorities and objectives of the Directorate

5. The three priorities for the Directorate and its partners for 2010-2013 outlined within the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) agreed by the Oxfordshire Children and Young People's Trust (OCYPT) are:

Keeping all children and young people safe

- Children and young people to grow up in safe, healthy and supportive environments.
- Children, young people and families to be able to access strong preventative and early intervention services before problems get worse.
- Children and young people, who suffer abuse or neglect, to receive the best possible service. This means that those at risk of harm, or who are suffering actual harm, will be a top priority for all agencies.

Raising Achievement for all children and young people

- Children and young people to achieve their full potential by accessing outstanding learning opportunities, play and positive activities.
- Children and young people to feel happy, safe and to strive to do the very best they can.
- Children and young people to become confident to support themselves and actively contribute to their local community and beyond.

Narrowing the gap for our most disadvantaged and vulnerable groups

- To narrow the gap in achievement by providing vulnerable children and young people who are missing out with greater access to high quality provision and services.
- To ensure that children, young people and families benefit from effective, early and targeted support when they face additional challenges, in particular, those with learning difficulties and disabilities.
- To ensure that organisations work together, in partnership with children, young people and families, to break the cycle of deprivation and low expectation, particularly for children living in, or on the fringe of poverty.

- The CEF Directorate's services, provision and influence make a major contribution to delivery of the objectives and targets in the CYPP. In order to have more impact on achieving those objectives, CEF has developed the new Early Intervention Service which is charged with contributing to targets that will 'Narrow the Gaps' in outcomes for vulnerable children and will contribute to raising achievement through enhancing school readiness and resilience.
- The new Strategic Plan for Education, currently being consulted upon, recommends new ways of working and a more focussed and accelerated range of actions that when combined have the potential to deliver a positive shift in educational attainment across all Key Stages.
- The Oxfordshire Children and Young Person's Plan produced in 2009 will require renewal with the introduction of the newly created Health and Wellbeing Board. This will need to reconsider priorities and introduce new ways of working as a consequence of the current rapidly changing landscape of public services.

6. The Directorate has contributed to the priority outcomes of the Council in the following manner:

Thriving Oxfordshire

The introduction of early intervention hubs has focused resources in areas where priority needs have been identified. This has enabled assets to be maximised whilst focusing on what research identifies as the most crucial points in children's lives so as to ensure they achieve best possible outcomes. In addition the child protection and family support service of the County Council working with key partners, under the auspices of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board, help to keep children safe from harm in the range of settings they live, learn and play in.

Healthy and Thriving Communities

The Directorate is committed to keeping all children and young people safe; raising achievement for all children and young people and narrowing the gap for the most that are most disadvantaged and vulnerable. To achieve this, the service will ensure that organisations work together, in partnership with children, young people and families, so as to break the cycle of deprivation that has such a negative influence on their lives and lives of their families.

The Directorate will work with communities and local partners to broker new ways of working so as to deliver aspects of services that can no longer be funded through mainstream Council revenue budgets. Consultation and engagement with young people through "sounding boards" and other related mechanisms will be central to these ways of working.

All universal services available for children and families are aimed at promoting resilience and independence. There are a range of effective preventative services in place whose main objective is to avoid the need to escalate to more formal statutory levels of intervention. Where additional needs occur these are identified early to ensure that appropriate support can be provided to meet those needs. For children and families with specialist or complex needs services are provided to effectively meet their needs, reduce the risk of family breakdown and appropriately safeguard their welfare.

Efficient Public Services

The business strategy proposes the development and delivery of simpler structures, where possible combining the functions of teams and significantly streamline management and administrative functions. The ambition of the strategy is to creating lean teams, with decision making devolved whenever possible to the front-line. The intention is to make better and more effective use of resources. The recent establishment of a Joint Commissioning team will contribute to the delivery of the corporate business strategy by creating a single support service across adults and children's directorates. A review of the commissioning and contracting function will follow to ensure that contracted services are managed efficiently. The review will be carried out with a view to enabling further integration with Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group, subject to approval from the nascent Health & Wellbeing Partnership.

Delivering the Business Strategy**Directorate Statement**

Directorate	Children, Education & Families
2011/12 Gross Budget	£540.447m (Including a Schools Budget of £381.092m)
2011/12 FTE	FTEs

Year on Year changes as per 2011/12 – 2015/16 MTFP	2012/13 £m	2013/14 £m	2014/15 £m	Total £m
Previously Agreed Pressures and Funding	-0.460	-0.693	0.210	-0.943

Variations to MTFP Savings

Year on Year	2012/13 £m	2013/14 £m	2014/15	Total
Previously Agreed Savings	-6.432	-0.719	-1.197	-8.348
Variations to 2011/12 MTFP Savings	-0.725	0.125	0.245	-0.355
Revised Savings	-7.157	-0.594	-0.952	-8.703

7. The business strategy last year outlined the significant transformation required in order to deliver our financial and performance objectives. All of the work that we have delivered has aligned to the Corporate Business Strategy strands:

- Customer Focus;
- Reshaping Management by 25%;
- Changing the way we work;
- Supporting Customer Service Centre;

- Supporting Asset Management Strategy;
 - Information, Communication & Technology (ICT);
 - Supporting community self-help & Big Society;
 - Service and Structure Re/design.
8. The Directorate has implemented significant changes to the design and structure of the service. We have created an entirely new way of delivering our statutory responsibilities and designed our services based on research evidence to deliver a new Education & Early Intervention Service (EIS), redesigned some of our Social Care teams and started the redesign of our performance, quality assurance and commissioning arrangements with Social and Community Services (SCS).
 9. We undertook a public service consultation and staff consultation on our structure in February – April 2011. Cabinet approved the reorganisation proposals in April.
 10. The changes and reduction in staffing has involved a major commitment from the Directorate and colleagues from HR and Finance. There have been a number of challenges to resolve but overall the implementation of new organisational arrangements has been achieved without a major reduction in the performance of the service. Of significance:
 - The highest levels of reductions have been in management tiers leading to a leaner more focused management group. As we have undertaken our staffing restructure we have reviewed and amended the terms and conditions of some of our staff moving them where appropriate to Green Book conditions.
 - There has been no loss of frontline social work posts
 11. These changes do not include staff in the Quality and Compliance Service who are just commencing their restructuring with their colleagues in SCS as part of the new Joint Commissioning Service.
 12. We have taken a consistent approach to pay protection using the economic efficiency calculations and have held our protection at the equivalent of one grade for one year only. We believe this will reserve our position against potential changes in the economic position of the Council.
 13. Our Business Strategy outlined the importance of ensuring that new structures are supported through good organisational development and training in order to realise the benefits of new ways of working. As a consequence of our work in appointing between May and September we have not been able to commence our entire programme of organisational development

because staff have only recently been appointed. We are asking for these funds to be carried forward for 2012/13. We do not recommend that these funds should be taken as a saving because the success of our revised structure is dependent on supporting staff and managers to work differently through a well-resourced and sustained programme of development and training.

Early Intervention Service

14. One of the best examples of strands of the Corporate Business Strategy being delivered alongside the CEF Business Strategy is implementation of the new Early Intervention Service (EIS). The programme to set up the EIS Hubs and Satellites has involved a full range of partners including the Police, Health, Schools and children, young people and parents/carers. From a position of having 26 young people's centres, all part of the Council's asset and provision, we now have nearly all of them secured either as a hub, satellite or through a Big Society sustainable solution.
15. Colleagues from Environment & Economy (E&E), ICT and Finance were part of the work streams to ensure that asset management issues, finance and ICT were provided on budget and on time to support the opening of the new EIS. All but one of the hubs were ready for the 1 September 2011 commencement. Health in particular have been part of the work streams designed to bring the hubs on line and they are currently working on how they can further integrate their work alongside the EIS.
16. Our Early Intervention Service (EIS) is an innovative way of working and we have drawn up a comprehensive Performance Management Framework which links all data collection to key outcomes for children, young people and families. These include:
 - Improving children's school attendance and engagement;
 - Improving young people's engagement in Education, Employment & Training (EET);
 - Preventing young offending;
 - Reducing Under 18 conceptions;
 - Maximising take up of early years;
 - Ensuring improved educational outcomes for LAC
 - Reducing referrals to social care and providing sustained support for families leaving social care
 - Reducing level of young people admitted to hospital for non/accidental injuries including self/harm;
 - Improving early years foundation stage profile results for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups;

- Promoting health and well/being;
- Supporting young carers.

17. The establishment of the seven new EIS hubs has been a mammoth piece of work accomplished through a project board with a number of separate task and finish groups. This work has all been completed on time and as initially envisaged for the 1 September 2011. All of the new hubs have been fully operational since 1 September and 6 of the 7 hubs are fully established in their permanent premises. Only the Witney hub is currently operating from temporary premises due to site difficulties and other delays to building works required at their permanent location. The new hubs are operating in line with the restructured budgets for their activities.
18. Over 391 individual families transferred to the EIS as of 1 September. We have sustained the number of youth work sessions across the period of our restructuring. Before the restructuring there were 201 sessions of youth work, we are running the same amount of youth work sessions and planning to increase from that baseline. Since 12 September we have increased sessions from 67 evening and weekend open access sessions to 78 sessions evening and weekend open access sessions, this represents an immediate 14.2% increase. These figures do not include all the targeted sessions that are also taking place so the offer of sessions to youth overall exceeds 78. Comprehensive timetables of activities are in place in all the hubs.
19. Monthly monitoring for September 2011 forecasts that Home to School Transport costs will be lower than the reduced budget. This includes the effect of re/tendering and reorganisation of routes for the September 2011 school admissions round. The Directorate proposes that the further savings on Home to School Transport previously planned for 2013/14 and 2014/15 should be brought forward by one year. There should be no impact on current service delivery.
20. Whilst the required savings for 2011/12 are on track to be met, the future years' proposals present some challenges. Firstly, the medium term financial plan 2011/12 to 2014/15 included £0.5m further savings from the Early Intervention Service during 2012/13. As indicated above, operation of the new Early Intervention Service commenced five to six months later than had originally been envisaged and has only just commenced operation in a stable situation. Differing needs are being identified in each hub area which may give rise to a need to transfer some resources between hubs. Due to these two factors it is now thought inappropriate to set a further significant savings target for the Early Intervention Service. It is proposed to remove this proposed variation from the 2012/13 financial plan.

Education

21. As part of our restructuring we have redesigned our Education service and brought it together with the Early Intervention Service under one Deputy Director. The role of the Local Authority (LA) in school improvement remains uncertain. The Education Bill is currently progressing on its passage through Parliament and the House of Lords. All of the grants supporting additional resources for the LA were removed in addition to the funding from National Strategies which was already due to end and which was known prior to the last general election.
22. Funding uncertainties for schools and the LA may affect both CEF and Council. Oxfordshire Schools are in the lowest quartile of per pupil funding in England. The recent Local Authority Central Services Equivalent Grant (LACSEG) consultation could have a significant financial impact on us; however DfE has not yet published any outcomes from the consultation. Assuming the government mechanism to deduct funds from local authorities to pass on to academies is unchanged from proposals in their consultation, if all maintained schools nationally converted to Academies this could give a £24m consequence for us through the LA Formula Grant allocation based on 2012/13 budget values. Since the potential deduction exceeds the amount spent by the Directorate on the relevant services, estimates of the potential impact in each year have been built in to corporate budget assumptions for the authority as a whole.
23. The Schools Strategic Funding Review has delivered a methodology for the Early Years Single Funding Formula and is awaiting further developments on the Schools Funding mechanism to complete its work. Financial modelling has been made and once we know the outcome of the reviews nationally we will be in a good position to move forward with local funding formula changes.
24. As part of the Directorate's engagement with schools we are committed to challenging poor attainment levels. We are ambitious as part of our community leadership role to work with parents, governors and the local media to ensure that in Oxfordshire we are more aspirational for all of our children in young people. The Lead Member for School Improvement will in 2012/13 ensure a targeted focus on improving those schools who are below floor targets or who are seen to be "coasting". Actions have where appropriate been taken to sustain current provision and arrangements. The on/going impact for the Directorate and Schools will be addressed within the planned Education Strategy.
25. During July DfE implemented a long unused provision of the Education Act 1996. This extends our duty to provide education for children out of school with medical needs to 25 hours per week with effect from September 2011. We have been working to quantify the pressure, and find different ways to deliver differently with the Hospital School and Home Tuition service. We have

cautiously estimated a pressure of £1.0m. This cost falls within matters that can be met from the Dedicated Schools Grant however Schools Forum will need to formally consulted on our proposals to meet this duty. If the duty can be met by increasing the budget and activities of the Hospital School there should be no impact on the regulatory Central Expenditure Limit (CEL). For budget setting purposes it is currently assumed that this £1.0m cost can be met within the DSG.

26. Education of young people of statutory school age is a legitimate charge on the Dedicated Schools Grant. Schools Forum must be consulted before such a charge can be made. Making this provision through the Hospital School would ensure that the budget was included in the total delegated budget of the authority, thereby avoiding additional costs falling on centrally retained budgets. The Central Expenditure limit would therefore not apply. Schools Forum has very helpfully supported a proposal that the costs of making this provision during 2011/12 can be met from DSG balances. As there is sufficient available funding within the DSG to meet all formal requirements such as the Minimum Funding Guarantee for schools as well as the provide the increased budget for the Hospital School budget proposals currently assume that this pressure will be met from DSG in 2012/13 and beyond. However it is important to note that Schools Forum has not yet been formally consulted on this proposal and consideration will need to be given to their views once they are known.
27. The directorate is trying to determine the costs associated with the new duty to provide free early education for 'most disadvantaged' 2 year olds. We have yet to see the guidance on what constitutes the most disadvantaged and therefore cannot accurately predict the resource consequences for us. We estimate the costs will over time build up to between £1m and £2m. Indications from government are that a new grant "Fairness Premium" will be introduced from April 2013 which should be used to provide early education for all disadvantaged 2 year olds. Oxfordshire's allocation from this grant has not yet been announced. At present it is assumed that the cost of the required provision will be met in full by the new grant.
28. We have been building up our ability to trade services to schools. An example of this is our Educational Psychology Educational Service which has generated an income of £0.438m in its first year of trading.
29. It is proposed reallocate the funding source for a number of central budgets to improve the clarity of the use of DSG, and at the same time to reduce some existing DSG contingency allocations. Overall these adjustments will result in a £0.300m reduction in funding required from the authority's base budget.
30. We had planned as part of the Business Strategy to deliver an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) unit within Oxfordshire to meet the special educational needs (SEN) of children and young people who are currently placed outside of the County. This would give us financial savings and be more effective for children and young people. Our number of ASD children placed outside of

the county is higher than statistical neighbours and the needs are growing for ASD SEN children and young people. We had originally planned to utilise a property asset realised through the plans for local Libraries. However, this has not been possible and this has delayed some of our planning, we continued our search and also held consultation meetings with parents/carers and other groups including the voluntary sector. (Cross reference CEF 8 in last year's plans). Members of the Capital Investment Board (CIB) have approved a proposal for a capital investment for basic needs and feasibility study based at the Ormerod special school site (CIB Minute 9 August 2011). This has resulted in us seeking to re/profile the saving for forthcoming years. Current proposals simply remove the existing £1m saving target from 2012/13. The replacement saving is not yet modelled in these papers however should contribute part year effect in 2014/15 with full effect by 2015/16. The Directorate will bring forward proposals to meet the 2013/14 shortfall during 2012, alongside considering the impact of other major changes affecting local authority funding.

31. It was originally intended to reduce the LA contribution to centrally retained elements of the Schools Budget so as to provide £1m savings in 2011/12, a further £0.5m in each of 2012/13 and 2013/14 and £0.195m in 2014/15. In fact the whole of the LA contribution has been removed from the Schools Budget in the 2011/12. Some £0.5m represented overhead costs of the local authority run children's centres and as part of the changes this money is now held within the Children's Centres budget of the authority. Consequently one of the tranches of £0.5m savings cannot be achieved. In effect £1.7m of the total planned saving has been realised during 2011/12. The Directorate proposes to remove the future savings associated with this proposal from the medium term plan.
32. The coalition government has made schools responsible for providing an all age careers service since September 2011 however OCC has continued to fund some transitional support for schools through 2011/12. It is proposed to further reduce that extra support during 2012/13 and cease support from April 2013. It is intended that the Early Intervention Service will pick up responsibility for tracking and assisting young people who are not in employment, education or training.
33. Work has commenced to review the management structure and commissioning arrangements currently in place for Children's Centres. This review would seek to align the service provision along the hub model ensuring a seamless service for children and their families from birth to 19 years old. Savings with the review are expected to be £175k in 2012/13 with a further £325 in 2013/14. This will protect services and reach to families provided by the county's 44 children's centres whilst making modest savings from eradicating duplication, sharing best practice and exploring innovative management and administrative solutions.
34. The cost of the City Schools Re/Organisation (which was implemented during 2003/04) was repaid in full ahead of schedule during 2010/11, therefore releasing a saving earlier than previously anticipated.

Children's Social Care (CSC)

35. The reorganisation of services has been completed and new managerial arrangements have been put into place. Teams (although not changed in size) have changed the way in which they are organised. CSC has continued to work with increased and sustained demand for child protection services over the last year.
36. The £0.050m savings required from the corporate parenting budget will be met from the reorganisation work currently underway. It is intended that current management arrangement within the service be reconfigured so as to create better fit, improve management arrangements and reduce staffing costs. This will be achieved without recourse to redundancy.
37. As part of 2012/13 business strategy refresh we will be re/designing the Youth Offending Service (YOS). Work to review the YOS was already underway and we paused this work during the YOS inspection. We are undertaking benchmarking of the service against other YOS in order to assist our review and redesign. Redesigning management and staffing structures consistently with the restructuring of other parts of the Directorate is estimated to save £0.300m per annum. Changes in regulations will require local authorities to pick up the remands to custody costs for young people sentenced by the youth courts. This is likely to take affect from April 2012. On the basis of previous sentencing patterns it is estimated that the additional revenue cost that will fall to local authority are likely to be in the region of £0.150m.
38. The demand for CSC has continued to increase year on year:
- **Contacts** to CSC have increased year on year, in 2008/09 they were 10,208, increasing in 2009/10 to 12,046 and we estimate based on the first six months of this year will increase to 16,265
 - **Referrals** have increased from 4,928 (2008/09), to 5,501 (2009/10) and we estimate based on the first six months of this year will increase to 6,398.
 - **Initial assessments** have increased from 2,715 (2008/09), to 3,292 (2009/10) to 3,373 (2010/11) and we estimate based on the first six months of this year will increase to 3,521.
 - **Core assessments** have increased from 880 (2008/09), to 1,317 (2009/10) to 1,859 (2010/11) and we estimate based on the first six months of this year will increase to 2,210.
39. The service will need to implement the recommendations of the Professor Eileen Munro Reports and will continue to work closely with the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board to ensure adequate provision of safeguarding services.

40. The number of children with a child protection plan has increased and the number of care proceedings has seen a corresponding increase. Legal services will quantify these pressures in their contribution to the Chief Executives Star Chamber. The service is meeting increased demand, and sustaining performance improvements this is a significant achievement although clearly increased demand may lead to additional resource and capacity pressures.
41. Over the past 12 months, the number of eligible young people for the Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Service have reduced, with the trend likely to continue in the upcoming years. The expected current year underspend is proposed to be carried through to the rest of the financial plan as an additional £0.300m savings.

Cross Directorate Delivery

42. The creation and transfer of The Business & Skills Team has replaced our 14-19, 16-19 and Oxfordshire Education Business Partnership arrangements. The budget and savings targets associated with this team were transferred to Environment & Economy on 1 October 2011. Savings targets for 2010/11 are forecast to be achieved and budget planning show that savings will be met as agreed for 2011/12.
43. As part of the service and resource planning last year, the Music Service was transferred to CEF. A saving for the Music Service to achieve a greater saving as part of this year's Business Strategy was set and is on target to be met. Our approach has been consistent with the Outdoor Centres, in that we expect the Music Service to be self-funding. The Music Service has a plan to deliver and will be assisted to deliver further reductions, for example any new appointments for music tutoring will be made on Local Government terms and conditions unless a qualified teacher is required for the role.
44. In addition to the above, due to the complexity of the restructuring proposals for Children's Services during 2011/12, the medium term financial plan included a provision for the potential impact of double counting across multiple savings proposals. As the restructuring nears completion it is now becoming clear that the impact of double counting was much less than was provided for. Accordingly this provision is no longer required for future plans and will also be removed.

Performance Achievements

45. During 2011/12 the Directorate has sustained performance in most areas and delivered a number of key performance improvements including:

Ofsted Inspections:

- Unannounced Inspection of Referral and Contact arrangements (November 2010) – no priority actions.
- Safeguarding and Looked After Inspection (May 2011) Judgement Overall Good (20 summary judgements of good, one outstanding, one adequate, none inadequate)
- Children's Homes (July 2011) - Good with outstanding features
- Adoption Inspection (July 2011) awaiting publication.

Performance improvement in

- The proportion of CP plans lasting 2+ years has decreased from 8.8% (2009/10) to 5.5% (2010/11)
- The timeliness of LAC reviews improved during 2010/11 (from 88.4% to 93.7% which is 0.7% above target)
- The number of children adopted in 2010/11 was 21 and over 90% of them were adopted within 12 months of agency decision. This compares favourably with similar authorities.
- The LAC population has reduced from 450 (Mar 2010) to 430 (Mar 2011) even though there has been a rise in care proceedings indicating that the needs of the LAC population are elevated, but the LAC population has been well/controlled by our edge of care services.
- More families have been supported by our Family Information Service (FIS) during the first quarter of the 2011/12 business cycle (April / June 2011); we supported 105 vulnerable families with the provision of in/depth, brokerage support.
- The percentage of care leavers in employment, education and training (EET) has held up well and improved during 2010/11, up from 76.5% in Q1 to 78.4% (well above the national average) by Q4, this is despite the difficult economic climate.
- The proportion of 16-18 year olds not in education, training or employment (NEET) fell from a high of 8.1% in 2010/11 to 5.7%, despite the continuing difficult circumstances. This is below the national rate of 6.0% and the latest figures show some of our statistical neighbours are as high as 19%.
- We have had particular success this year with 71% of our Early Years / Childcare providers being judged Good or Outstanding. The number of childminders getting a good grading on their first inspection has improved and there are improved ratings for childminders who previously had inadequate inspection results.

- The percentage of Key Stage 2 pupils attaining the threshold Stage 2 achievement of level 4 or above in both English and Maths remains above the national average, at 75%.
- Progression rates from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 have improved to above the national average.
- Rates of teenage pregnancy have fallen for the last two years, with a 13% reduction from last year to a rate of 26.1 conceptions per 1000. This is the lowest level since the start of the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy in 1999. Our latest figures show a continuing improvement in 2010.
- Permanent Exclusions have been reduced by over half in two years (81 in 2008/09, 44 in 2009/10, 36 in 2010/11). There were two permanent exclusions from Primary schools in 2010/11, compared to six in 2008/09. There were no special school permanent exclusions in 2010/11 compared to two in 2009/10. There have been no permanent exclusions of Looked After Children in the last three academic years.

46. We have increased the number of centres offering Duke of Edinburgh (DoE) awards from 37 to 53. There has been a 13.59% increase in the number of active participants with 3294 young people now engaged on a programme. Within the overall growth is an increase of 190% for vulnerable young people, this includes a 6.25% increase of young people with disabilities and a 75.25% increase in Black & Asian Minority Ethnic participants. The number of adult volunteers has risen by 10.45%. These figures raise Oxfordshire to above the national average with numbers still on the increase.

47. We have successfully run a pilot of the National Citizen Service within the county. 34 young people successfully completed their National Citizen Service in Oxfordshire in the summer 2011, and a further 17 young people completed the initial phases of the programme. The programme reached a wide and diverse range of young people including 11 young people in the care system and 14 with disabilities. The 6 week programme involved completing an outdoor adventure residential, an in/county residential exploring the concept of 'social action'; and 3 further weeks planning and undertaking social action projects in 4 areas across Oxfordshire:

- Witney young people raised £484.17 for Witney Community hospital by holding a fundraiser day
- Abingdon young people raised £245 for The Abingdon Bridge project by holding a fundraiser day
- Oxford young people raised £304.05 for Oxford Homeless Pathways by doing a 12 hour fast, dressing up in fancy dress and completing challenges to "Make Oxford Smile"
- Banbury young people raised £785 for Katharine House Hospice by undertaking a "Teen Zoo" - 30 hours sitting in a cage which they constructed in the centre of Banbury dressed as zoo animals.

48. We have developed, with over 250 young people a new website (OXME), for children and young people in Oxfordshire. This has reduced thirteen separate websites into one and it now has space for different ages of children and young people.

Conclusion

49. This report outlines the current position of the Directorate in relation to its current operational and financial performance along with the key risks that must be addressed. It provides proposals to address the financial challenges facing the service in 2012/13 along with details of how variations to the agreed medium term financial plan will be managed.

50. There have in recent months been considerable challenges for the Directorate, in particular, the reorganisation of our services, the delivery of significant savings and the outcomes of a number of major service inspections from our regulators. These have in large part been met and place ourselves in a position to move positively forward in 2012/13.

51. There is a need to refresh the current business plan in order to capture current Government thinking and address the priorities and ambitions of the County Council. This needs to be done against a backcloth of reducing resources and new relationships with partner organisations. It is intended to develop this work in the coming months and present to Cabinet in March of 2012 for consideration.

Jim Leivers
Acting Director of Children, Education and Families

2 December 2011